Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Community Learning and Playing Together
Our theme for the month of May is Diversity. Some people have different feeling and beliefs than I do. Some people dress and act differently than I do. Although there are many ways we are all the same, I can learn from and respect people who are different than me. When I am accepting and tolerant, I do not judge others for being different than I am. The following shares just a few of the diverse efforts with our Paws-itive learning community.

Walking School Bus
Our walking school bus is off to a great start. We started last Wednesday, May 9, which was also National Walk and Bike to School Day. Students and parents walked to and from school together, enjoying the exercise, opportunities to socialize, and the great weather.

We chose to start small, with one walking school bus from the Stone Creek area walking to and from school on Wednesdays, about a mile each way. I had a chance to join the fifteen walkers of the Stone Creek walking school bus the first day. They were led by Tami Rowen and Gretchen Lincoln. This is a fun group that enjoys their time together. I appreciated the caring conversations, experiencing the positive feeling of having students and parents joining us along the way, and waving to passersby as we walked.

Word is getting out. Our second Wednesday had our Stone Creek bus growing to about 19 walkers. We also gained a second walking school bus from the Lockwood Creek development. This bus was created and led by the caring efforts of Holly Smith.

Though we are starting small, I look forward to experiencing what our walking school buses become for our paws-itive community.

Movie Night
As you know, our Watch D.O.G. and Jumpstart Backpack programs have helped many in our community. Both programs do have financial costs. Sherri Birgensmith and many of our caring community members have worked to gain financial support through such means as grants from the Casino Charitable Trust and a Zumba fundraiser. Sherri and our Bobcat Ambassadors planned for and led a community movie night last Friday evening. We enjoyed snacks and watching Alvin and The Chipmunks in “Chipwrecked”. I felt we had great attendance when considering the wonderful weather outside and all the other events going on. We had around 65 students and a lot of parent support. To further support the event, we had three Watch D.O.G.S., five parent volunteers, and nine Bobcat Ambassadors helping out. In all, we were able to gain $200 for our Watch D.O.G. and Jumpstart programs. I would like to give a big thank you to all who helped make this a fun event and help our community.

Staff and Room Changes for 2012-2013
Each year we need to contemplate some changes to adjust for such things as improved student support, different student numbers, and various other needs. The following shares some of our changes for the 2012-2013 school year.

Staff Role Changes
Amy Wise has been kind to take on the role of supporting our first and second grade students through her efforts as our 1st/2nd grade multi-age teacher. Her efforts will help us to do such things as learn more about the positives of utilizing a older/younger model and will help us

adjust to the numbers of students at each grade level in our school. I know Amy will do an excellent job, and I look forward to learning from her.

Dennis Skufca has enjoyed working with her group of students this year and is aware of many of the great positives for students when looping. She has volunteered to loop up to second grade with her current class. I have looped with classes twice in my teaching career and look forward to again experiencing the many positives of doing so. Denise will do a great job.

As you know, Sarah Stein has resigned her position to work full time as a great mom to two wonderful children. We are moving her FTE to third grade to help support student learning with a larger cohort group. Otherwise, we would have only four teachers in third grade. Peter Poppert has worked hard to step in and support our third graders. Unfortunately, his position is a one year only. Our third grade position has opened in-district. If we do not fill it in-district, it will open up outside district. I look forward to seeing all the great applicants we will have.

We are moving a fifth grade cohort to the middle school which is about one certificated FTE larger than the cohort replacing them. With this, we need to move a teacher from fifth grade to the middle school. Joyce Mosby has been offered, and has accepted a position working at the middle school to support such areas as health. I appreciate her willingness to help the fifth grade team out and look forward to hearing some of the neat things she does to support her health students.

Room Changes

As you know, with the water events early in the school year, we needed to relocate our preschool to the middle school. We had an agreement to move them back to the elementary for the 2012-2013 school year. For many reasons, including number of students, proximity to kindergarten, proximity to an individual bathroom, and feeling more like a part of the elementary, preschool will be moving to Teresa Smith's current room, Rm. 314.

Our Learning Club and Greg Hall's resource room are running a little tight with full classes doing SuccessMaker, Learning Club groups working, and Greg's groups working all within the same portable. We can actually have constant transitions with six separate groups and one whole class working on computers within the same portable on different subjects at the same time. Teresa Smith will be moving to Lola's current room, Rm. 309. This will give us more space for Teresa and Greg to work with students, with Greg still utilizing a smaller portion of his current location. Teresa being in room 309 will also give our preschool students access to an individual bathroom and allow her to better supervise our smaller resource room at the back of Laurie Kerr's room.

Lola Nordstrom will be moving to Sarah Stein and Nikki Kent's current room, Rm. 327. This will give Lola more space to work with her kindergarteners who cover more space when learning. Lola, Colleen Johnson, and Lynette Lindblom will also have proximity which can help them with collaboration.